

REMARKS

This application has been carefully reviewed in light of the Office Action dated December 19, 2005. Claims 4 to 6, 8, 9, 13 to 18, 20 to 24, 26 and 29 to 31 are pending in the application, with Claims 1 to 3, 7, 10 to 12, 19, 25, 27 and 28 having been cancelled. Claims 4, 5, 8, 9, 13, 14, 17, 18, 21 to 24 and 26 have been amended, and Claims 4, 8, 13 and 26 are in independent form. Reconsideration and further examination are respectfully requested.

Applicant thanks the Examiner for the indication that Claims 4, 8, 13, 16, 26 and 30 would be allowable if rewritten into independent form, including all of the limitations of the base claims. In keeping with the indication of allowable subject matter, Applicant has rewritten Claims 4, 8, 13 and 26 into independent form and to include the substance of their respective base claims. Consequently, independent Claims 4, 8, 13 and 26 as amended, together with their dependent claims, are seen to be in condition for allowance.

In the Office Action, Claims 25 and 26 were objected to for allegedly failing to particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter that the Applicant regards as the invention. Claim 25 has been cancelled without prejudice or disclaimer of subject matter. Claim 26 as amended recites a method of searching for images. Reconsideration and withdrawal of this objection are respectfully requested.

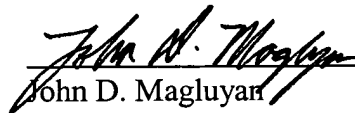
Claims 21 and 23 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 101 for allegedly claiming non-statutory subject matter. Claims 21 and 23 have been amended, and reconsideration and withdrawal of this rejection are respectfully requested.

Claims 1 to 3, 5, 6, 9 to 12, 14, 15, 17, 18, 20 to 25, 27, 28 and 31 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) over “Image Retrieval Using Flexible Image Subblocks” (Ko) in view of “Similarity of Color Images” (Stricker); and Claims 7 and 29 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) over Ko in view of Stricker and further in view of “Extracting Multi-Dimensional Signal Features for Content-Based Visual Query” (Chang). The foregoing actions have been taken without prejudice or disclaimer of subject matter, and without conceding correctness of the rejections, but rather strictly to obtain an earlier allowance.

No other matters being raised, it is believed that the entire application is fully in condition for allowance, and such action is courteously solicited.

Applicant’s undersigned attorney may be reached in our Costa Mesa, California office at (714) 540-8700. All correspondence should continue to be directed to our below-listed address.

Respectfully submitted,


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